



2025 Spirit of Water Essay Contest
Scholarship Opportunity for High School Students

The Iowa Water Center (IWC) invites students from around the state to participate in the 2025 IWC "Spirit of the Water" Essay Contest.

This year, we challenge Iowa High School students to write an essay that relates to the following theme: **"Life Depends on Water. Water Depends on You"**. Submissions should also include a photo taken by the student to support their essay related to this topic.

There are two options for submissions — a Creative Writing Track or a Research Track. Applicants should select one of the following:

- **Creative Writing Track:** A written work that displays imagination or invention. Written works can be in the form of storytelling with the use of literary themes, character development, and expresses thoughts and emotions related to theme. Creative writing can be fiction or non-fiction.
- **Research Track:** An essay written with clarity and organization that synthesizes what is learned from written material and scientific discovery as related to the theme. Research essays require a minimum of three resources.

Essay winners will receive a monetary prize and course scholarships to the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory as follows:

- **First Place:** \$500 and 4 hours of free credit at the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory (\$1700 value)
- **Second Place:** \$300 and 2 hours of free credit at the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory (\$900 value)
- **Third Place:** \$300

The contest closes on April 25, 2025, 5 p.m. Central Time.

Submission Guidelines

Students enrolled in grades 9-12 in public, private, and home schools in the State of Iowa are eligible to submit an essay.

A **qualifying submission** for judging must include the following:

1. Written essay with the theme of **"Life Depends on Water. Water Depends on You."**
An emphasis should be placed on water resource management within the essay.
All essays must be 500 to 1000 words (approximately 4 pages typed in 12-point font, double-spaced). For the research track, please use in-text citations for references. The reference list does not count towards the required essay length and must use MLA formatting.

2. Photo taken by student to support the essay
3. Student Information Form - This form (found on the Iowa Water Center website) must be completed and sent with the essay to qualify for the contest.

Submissions should be sent via email to: iowawatercenter@iastate.edu.

Confirmations will be sent to recipients upon submission. Submissions will be evaluated by a three-person panel representing the Iowa water community. The creative writing track and the research track will be evaluated within the same competition (i.e. there will be one 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prize winner across all essays).

Essays will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. Creativity/Originality
2. Focus/Main Point
3. Organization/Format
4. Language/Style
5. Grammar

Questions regarding the contest can be directed to Zita Quade, zquade@iastate.edu.